

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LAGOS 02102 171845Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 SY-05 CCO-00 SSO-00 A-01
/023 W

-----075779 171905Z /40

O 171706Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6642

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2102

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FOR AFRICAN BUREAU

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, BBLD
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY POWER FOR EMBASSY

REF: LAGOS 1969

1. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS LAGOS HAS BEEN EXPERIENCING INCREASINGLY SEVERE POWER SHORTAGES WHICH HAVE FORCED NIGERIAN ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY TO ADOPT DRACONIAN 'LOAD-SHEDDING' PROGRAM. AS DEPARTMENT END-USERS OF EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC REPORTING ARE AWARE, THESE CUTS ARE PRODUCING SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT INDUSTRIAL SECTOR. DUNLOP TIRES, FOR EXAMPLES, WITH 2500 WORKERS IN A FACTORY THAT ONCE RAN 24 HOURS A DAY, IS NOW DOWN TO 12 HOURS A DAY AND FEARS BEING FORCED TO SIX. PRODUCTION IS DOWN TO 30 PERCENT OF NORMAL. GUINNESS BREWERIES IS AT 40 PERCENT. NIGERIA TEXTILES, ONE OF THE LARGEST INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE CITY WITH SOME 5,000 WORKERS IS ON THE EDGE OF BANKRUPTCY AND MAY BE FORCED TO CLOSE.

2. THESE POWER SHORTAGES ARE WITHOUT PROSPECT FOR IMPROVEMENT BEFORE MID-YEAR, BY WHICH TIME NEW GENERATORS TO BE PROVIDED BY GENERAL ELECTRIC MAY PERMIT SOME RESTORATION
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OF NORMAL POWER LEVELS. MEANWHILE OUR EMBASSY IS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY FOR MORE THAN HALF OF EACH WORKING DAY. FOR EMERGENCY USE THE EMBASSY IS CURRENTLY RELVING ON A VINTAGE PRE-WWII GENERATOR WHICH WAS SENT FROM WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND ABOUT EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO. IT HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEFIED THE BEST TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AVAILABLE FROM AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND LOCAL PERSONNEL TO MAKE IT OPERABLE. SCHEMATIC AND OPERATING

MANUAL ARE NO LONGER IN EXISTANCE AND ALL ATTEMPTS BY THE EMBASSY TO OBTAIN SPARE PARTS HAVE PROVED UNSUCCESSFUL. IN SHORT, IT IS A WHITE ELEPHANT WITH NO FUTURE AND MUST BE REPLACED.

3. THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF THE EMBASSY ARE SEVERELY HAMPERED. LIGHT, AIR-CONDITIONING, WATER SUPPLY FOR TOILETS AND LAVATORIES, ELECTRIC TYPEWRITERS, COPYING AND CALCULATING MACHINES, SECURITY SYSTEMS, COLD STORAGE AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AND UTILITIES AT 1 KINGS COLLEGE ROAD - ALL OF THESE REQUIRE A DEPENDABLE SOURCE OF EMERGENCY ELECTRICAL POWER. WE DON'T HAVE IT. WITH THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, OUR SITUATION BECOMES EVEN MORE WORRISOME.

4. WE ASK THE BUREAU'S IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING A 280 KVA GENERATOR (PREFERABLY CATERPILLAR BECAUSE OF AVAILABLE LOCAL MAINTENANCE) AND ARRANGING FOR URGENT AIR SHIPMENT BY EITHER COMMERCIAL OR US GOVERNMENT FACILITIES. WE SUGGEST ONE QUICK WAY OF GETTING IT HERE MIGHT BE TO PUT IT ON AN ADVANCE PRESIDENTIAL TRIP AIRCRAFT. WE LEAVE TO YOU THE DECISION ON HOW THE GENERATOR MIGHT BE PAID FOR. MIGHT IT BE COVERED AS A PRESIDENTIAL TRIP EXPENSE?

5. AT SUCH TIME AS WE TRANSFER EMBASSY ACTIVITIES FROM KINGS COLLEGE ROAD TO OUR NEW CHANCERY, THIS GENERATOR WILL BE VERY MUCH UTILIZABLE AS A STANDBY FOR THE EXPANDED USIS OPERATION THAT WILL THEN OCCUPY THIS SITE.
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YOM INSPECTORS CONCUR IN URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LAGOS02102
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780074-0540
Format: TEL
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780242/aaaabjle.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f2f7a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 78 LAGOS 1969
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3563661
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMERGENCY POWER FOR EMBASSY
TAGS: OVIP, ABLD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f2f7a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014